

ten years on the edge  
**VERTIGO**

# FABLES

STORYBOOK  
LOVE  
2

Issue **15** sep 03  
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SUGGESTED FOR  
MATURE READERS





NO SHIT?  
THEY RAN OFF  
TOGETHER? SNOW  
WHITE AND THE  
SHERIFF?

YUP. DAY  
BEFORE  
YESTERDAY.  
ALL OF A  
SUDDEN,  
TOO.

SURE, I HEARD THEY  
WERE--YOU KNOW--SECRETLY  
BUMPING HEADBOARDS  
FOR MORE THAN A YEAR  
NOW, BUT--

YEAH,  
EVER SINCE  
SHE GOT OUT  
OF THE HOS-  
PITAL.

LAUNDROMAT

LEW  
ANTIQU

COOL  
NOOD  
NEW COMICS  
EVERY  
WEDNESDAY

NO, EVEN  
BEFORE THAT.  
SINCE REMEMBRANCE  
DAY--NOT THE LAST  
ONE, BUT THE YEAR  
BEFORE--BACK  
WHEN ROSE RED  
TURNED UP NOT  
DEAD.

I  
HEARD THEY  
ELOPED.

BIGBY I COULD  
ALMOST UNDERSTAND,  
GIVING IN TO HIS ANIMAL  
LURGES, BUT MISS WHITE?  
SHE'S SUCH AN ICE  
QUEEN.

ICE  
CREAM?  
YUM.

ARE YOU  
KIDDING? SHE'S  
GORGEOUS.

I'D SELL  
MY SOUL FOR  
ONE NIGHT  
WITH HER.

OKAY, MAYBE  
NOT MY SOUL, BUT  
I'D DEFINITELY  
SELL YOURS.

ANYONE  
ELSE  
HUNGRY?

REDHOOD  
LITTLE WHITE GIRL

TIN



AND EVEN WHILE IT'S BRUSHING  
UP AGAINST NOON IN FABLE-  
TOWN, IT'S STILL EARLY IN THE  
MORNING OUT WEST.



# Into the Woods

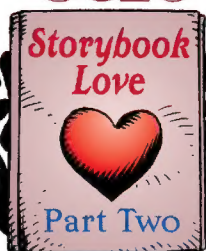
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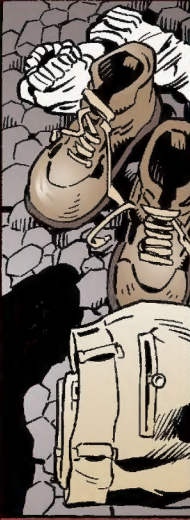
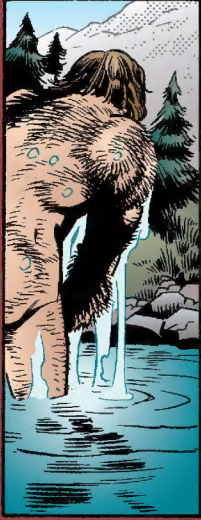
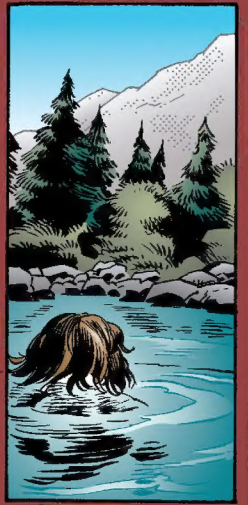
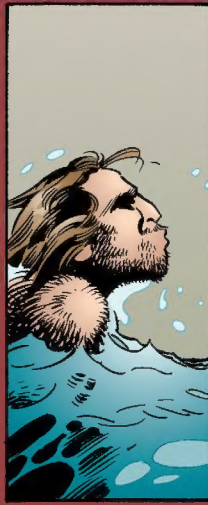
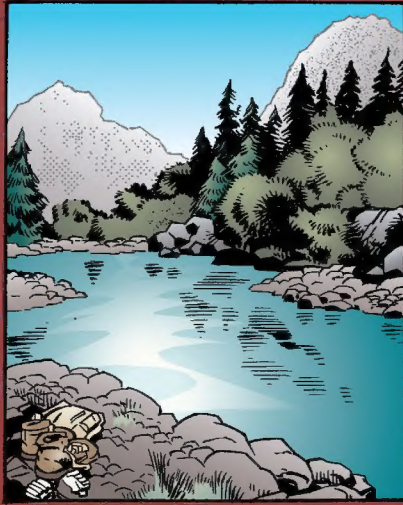
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WHUP  
WHUP  
WHUP

WHUP  
WHUP

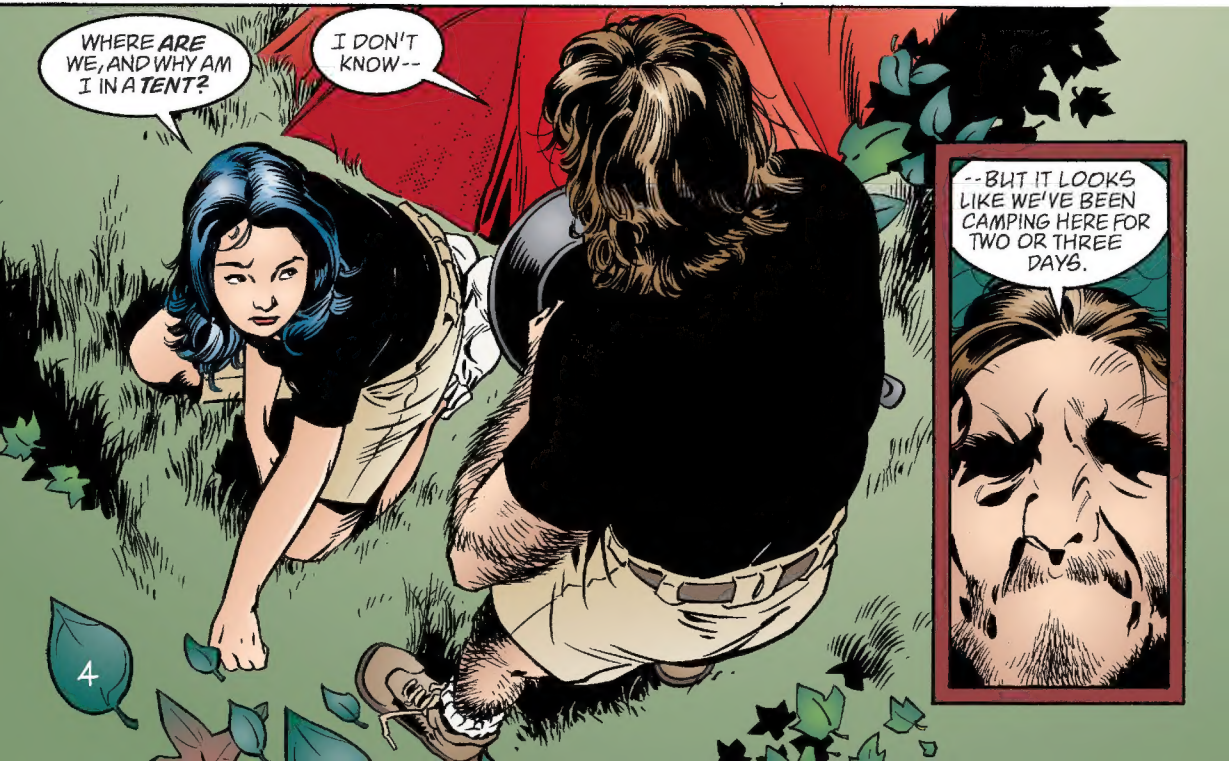
HUH?

WHAT  
ARE YOU  
DOING,  
BIGBY?

WHUP  
WHUP  
WHUP

TIME TO  
WAKE UP,  
SNOW.  
WE'VE GOT  
PROBLEMS.

PISS, WASH  
LIP AND GET  
DRESSED--  
WHATEVER  
YOUR MORNING  
ROUTINE IS. WE  
NEED TO GET  
GOING,  
PRONTO.



WHERE ARE  
WE, AND WHY AM  
I IN A TENT?

I DON'T  
KNOW--

-- BUT IT LOOKS  
LIKE WE'VE BEEN  
CAMPING HERE FOR  
TWO OR THREE  
DAYS.



AT THAT MOMENT,  
MOST OF A  
CONTINENT AWAY...

STEP ASIDE.  
I'M ON OFFICIAL  
FABLETOWN  
BUSINESS.

I'M WARNING  
YOU. WHY WON'T  
YOU ANSWER  
ME?

OH DEAR,  
YOU'RE NOT  
FABLES!

YOU'RE  
MUNDY  
RATS!







I HAD A GOOD LOOK THROUGH OUR EQUIPMENT BEFORE WAKING YOU.

WE'VE BOTH GOT CANCELED ONE-WAY PLANE TICKET STUBS FROM NEW YORK TO SEATTLE, SO MY GUESS IS WE'RE SOMEWHERE IN THE CASCADE MOUNTAINS-- BUT IT COULD BE THE OLYMPICS.

ALL OF THIS GEAR IS NEW, AND WAS PURCHASED FROM A SEATTLE OUTFITTER STORE CALLED RECREATIONAL EQUIPMENT. OUR CLOTHES, TOO.

SO WE FLEW OUT HERE WITH NOTHING--NOT EVEN LUGGAGE--AND DECIDED ON A LARK TO GO CAMPING?

TOGETHER?

IT LOOKS THAT WAY.

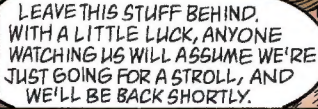
THAT'S PREPOSTEROUS! I WOULD NEVER DO THAT!

OF COURSE NOT. BUT WE'VE *OBVIOUSLY* BEEN UNDER SOME SORT OF TRANCE-- AN ENCHANTMENT THAT COMPELLED US TO HEAD OUT HERE AND PLAY RANGER RICK.





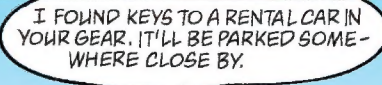
BUT WE'RE DONE WITH THAT, STARTING RIGHT NOW, SNOW.



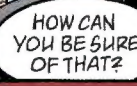
LEAVE THIS STUFF BEHIND, WITH A LITTLE LUCK, ANYONE WATCHING US WILL ASSUME WE'RE JUST GOING FOR A STROLL, AND WE'LL BE BACK SHORTLY.



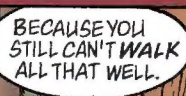
AND JUST WHERE IS IT WE ARE GOING?



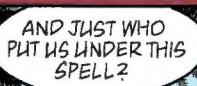
I FOUND KEYS TO A RENTAL CAR IN YOUR GEAR. IT'LL BE PARKED SOMEWHERE CLOSE BY.



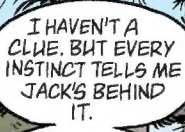
HOW CAN YOU BE SURE OF THAT?



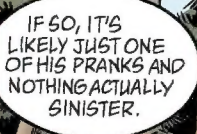
BECAUSE YOU STILL CAN'T WALK ALL THAT WELL.



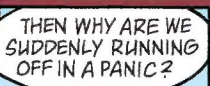
AND JUST WHO PUT US UNDER THIS SPELL?



I HAVEN'T A CLUE, BUT EVERY INSTINCT TELLS ME JACK'S BEHIND IT.



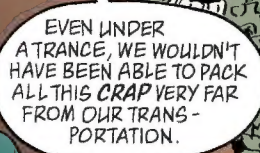
IF SO, IT'S LIKELY JUST ONE OF HIS PRANKS AND NOTHING ACTUALLY SINISTER.



THEN WHY ARE WE SUDDENLY RUNNING OFF IN A PANIC?



IN CASE IT ISN'T A HARMLESS PRANK.



EVEN UNDER A TRANCE, WE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PACK ALL THIS CRAP VERY FAR FROM OUR TRANSPORTATION.



MEANWHILE...



BUFKIN FOUND THESE TWO HERE IN THE BUSINESS OFFICE.

AND THIS ONE WAS PICKED UP ON THE ROOF, OUTSIDE THE MAYORAL PENTHOUSE.

I HAVE GRIMBLE, BUFKIN AND FLYCATCHER SEARCHING THE BUILDING FOR MORE OF THEM.

WHAT ARE MOWSE POLICEMEN DOING HERE OFF THE FARM, ANYWAY?

I DON'T KNOW, SO FAR THEY AREN'T TALKING.

SOME SORT OF SEASONAL INFESTATION, PERHAPS?

OBVIOUSLY THIS CALLS FOR AN IMMEDIATE INVESTIGATION.

THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT KING COLE SAID, BUT BIGBY AND SNOW ARE ABSENT...

I'LL DO IT.



WHY YOU?  
THIS DUTY REQUIRES  
SOMEONE WITH PROVEN  
STATUS IN THE  
COMMUNITY--

--SOMEONE  
MORE INVESTED  
IN OUR LONG-TERM  
PROSPERITY.

IT'S HARDLY  
A JOB WE CAN TRUST  
TO A NEWLY ARRIVED  
**COMMONER.**

NOW WAIT A  
MINUTE, BLUEBEARD,  
WE CAN ARGUE MY OTHER  
MERITS, BUT I **AM** A  
PRINCE AGAIN.

I BOUGHT  
MY TITLE BACK  
FROM JACK, THE  
DAY AFTER HE WON  
THE ONLINE  
AUCTION.

SNOW WHITE  
--DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS--

HOWEVER...

THAT MAY BE TECHNICALLY  
TRUE, BUT ONCE A TITLE HAS BEEN BOUGHT  
AND SOLD A FEW TIMES, LIKE SOME COMMODITY,  
IT LOSES ITS CACHET.

UHM...BE THAT  
AS IT MAY, SINCE THIS  
INVESTIGATION WILL INVOLVE  
**CLOSE** COORDINATION WITH  
THE FARM, AND SINCE PRINCE  
CHARMING SUCCESSFULLY  
CONDUCTED THE WAR CRIME  
TRIALS UP THERE, KING  
COLE WANTS HIM TO  
HANDLE IT.

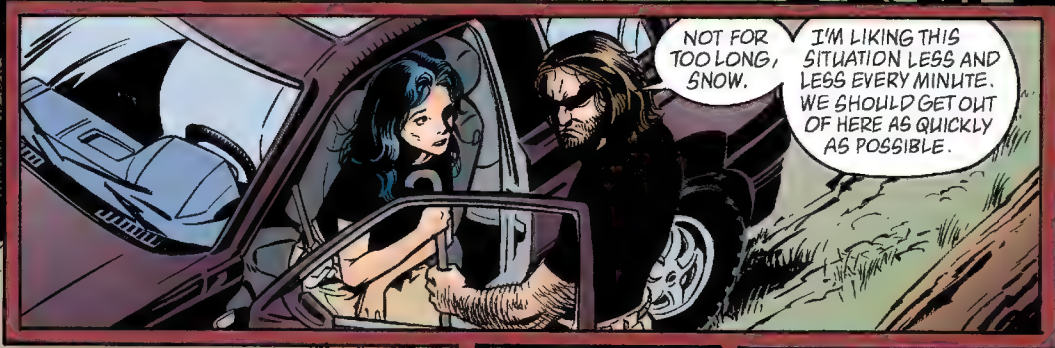
THIS IS A  
**GRIEVOUS** MISTAKE.  
HE'LL LET YOU DOWN.  
SOONER OR LATER HE  
LETS **EVERYONE**  
DOWN.





HERE WE ARE.

FINALLY, MY LEGS WERE ABOUT TO GIVE OUT. I NEED TO REST.



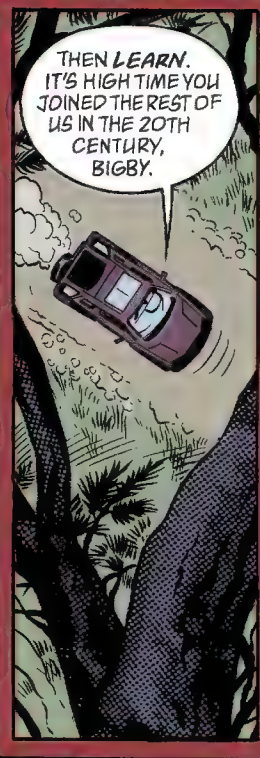
NOT FOR TOO LONG, SNOW.

I'M LIKING THIS SITUATION LESS AND LESS EVERY MINUTE. WE SHOULD GET OUT OF HERE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE.



THEN YOU DRIVE.

I DON'T KNOW HOW.



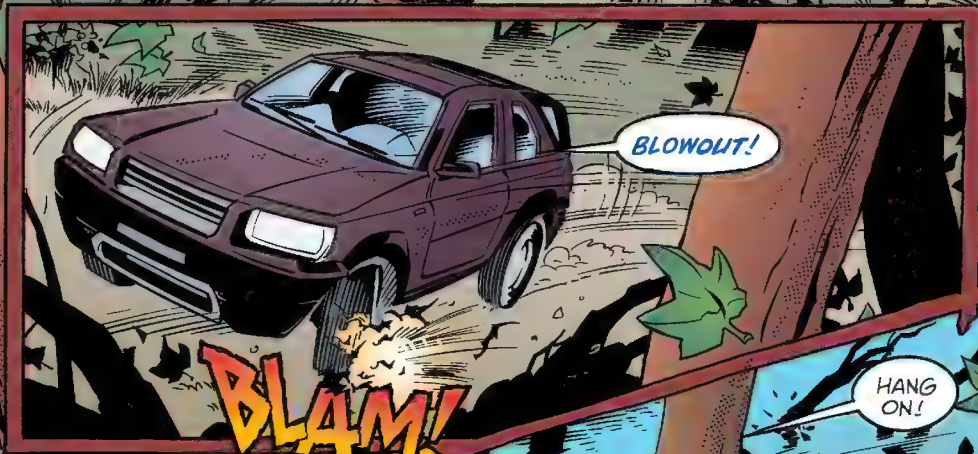
THEN LEARN. IT'S HIGH TIME YOU JOINED THE REST OF US IN THE 20TH CENTURY, BIGBY.



IT'S THE 21ST CENTURY NOW.

OH YEAH, I FORGOT. THEY GO BY SO FAST.





BLOWOUT!

**BLAM!**



HANG ON!

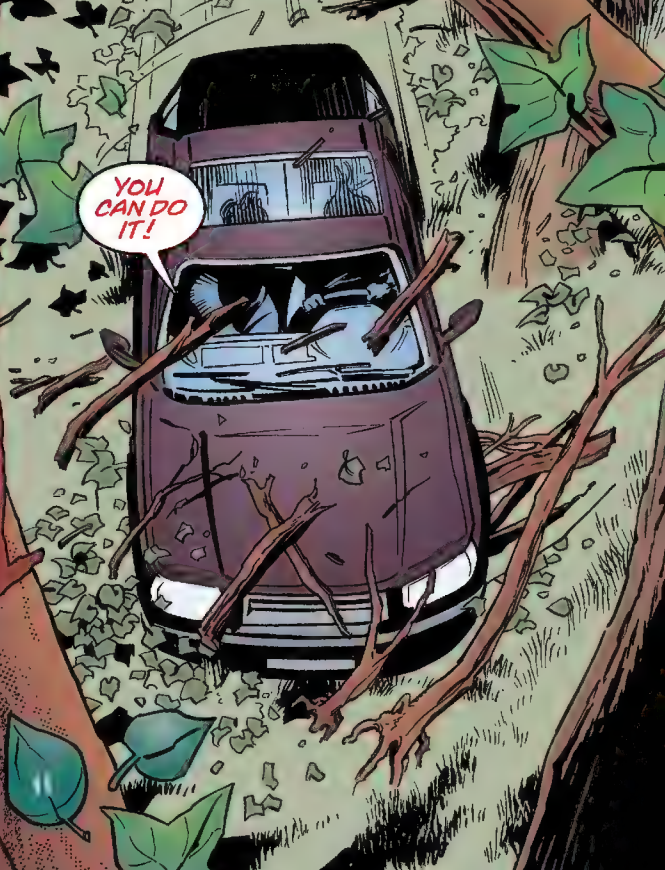


OH GOD!

OH GOD!

OH GOD!

HOLD ON, SNOW! YOU CAN STILL SAVE US, IF YOU CAN KEEP CONTROL OF THE CAR!

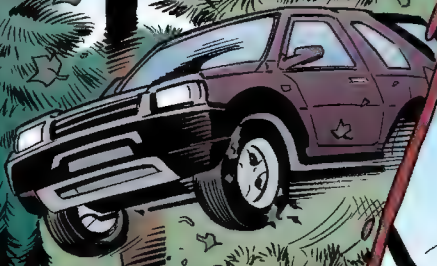


YOU CAN DO IT!

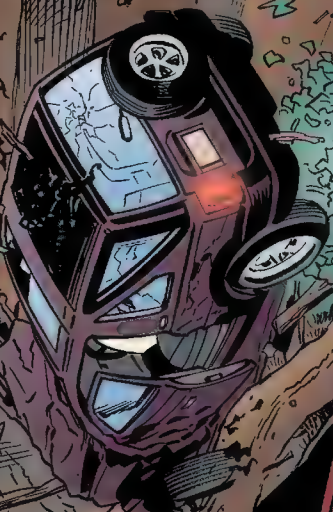


YOU'RE DOING FINE! WE'LL MAKE IT YET! AIM FOR THE THICKEST BRUSH!

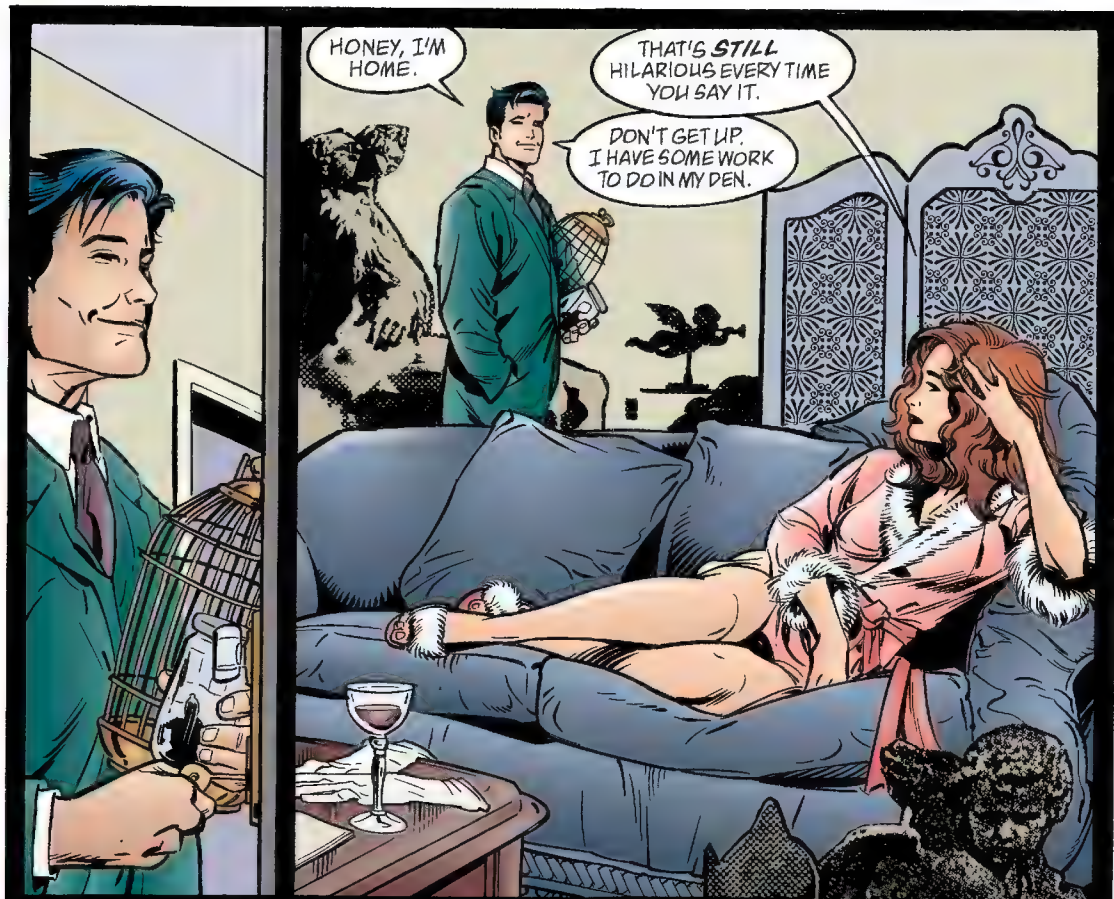
TRY TO AVOID HITTING THE TREES HEAD ON, BUT USE CONTACT WITH THEM TO SLOW US DOWN!



WE'VE HAD IT NOW!







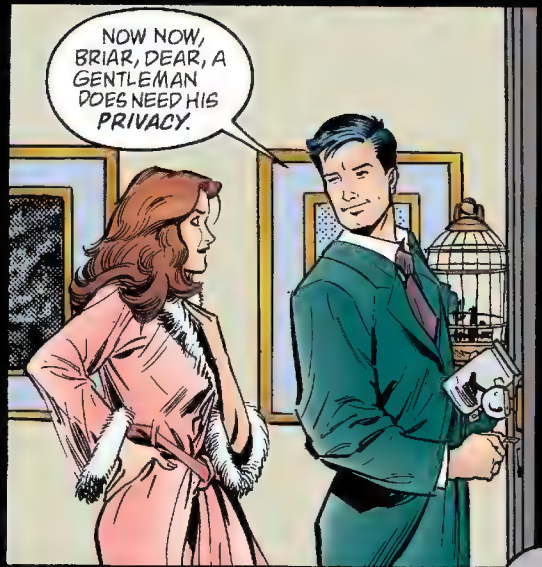
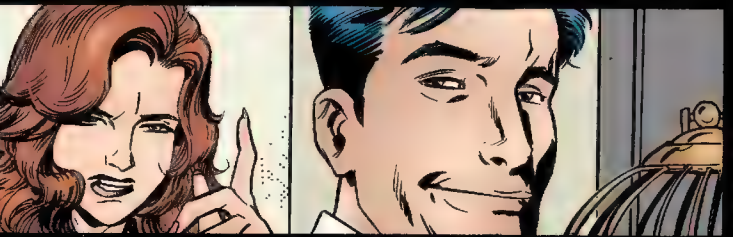
HONEY, I'M HOME.

THAT'S *STILL* HILARIOUS EVERY TIME YOU SAY IT.

DON'T GET UP. I HAVE SOME WORK TO DO IN MY DEN.

I DON'T LIKE YOU KEEPING A SECRET LOCKED ROOM IN MY APARTMENT. I DON'T RECALL AGREEING TO LET YOU HAVE AN EXTRA ROOM WHEN I ALLOWED YOU TO MOVE IN HERE.

MY CHARITY TOWARDS HOMELESS EX-HUSBANDS HAS ITS LIMITS.



NOW NOW, BRIAR, DEAR, A GENTLEMAN DOES NEED HIS PRIVACY.



I'LL BE OUT LATER TO RUN YOUR ERRANDS, PRINCESS.

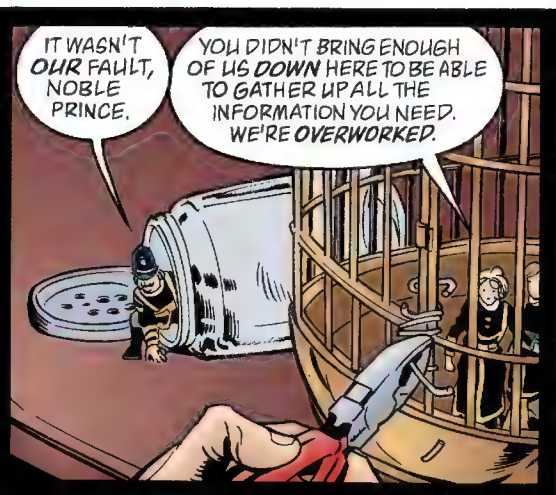


SLAM





NOW THAT WE'RE AWAY FROM PRYING EYES AND EARS, PERHAPS YOU THREE CAN EXPLAIN WHY YOU WERE SO INEPT AS TO GET CAUGHT.



IT WASN'T OUR FAULT, NOBLE PRINCE.

YOU DIDN'T BRING ENOUGH OF US DOWN HERE TO BE ABLE TO GATHER UP ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED. WE'RE OVERWORKED.



WE HAD TO TAKE CHANCES TO KEEP TO YOUR SCHEDULE.

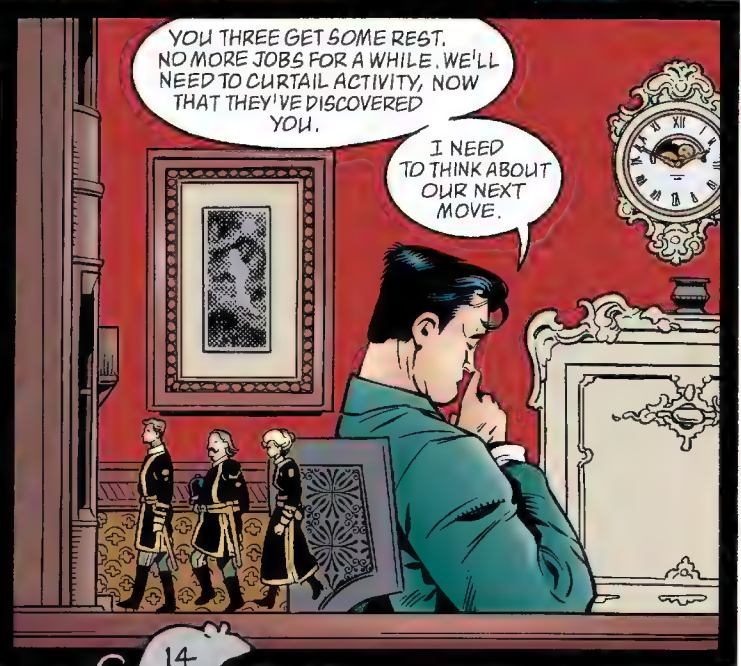


COULD YOU SPEAK UP? I CAN BARELY HEAR YOU. WHAT HAPPENED TO SERGEANT WILFRED?



HE HASN'T REPORTED IN FOR DAYS. I'M BEGINNING TO GET WORRIED.

I'M NOT. HE AND CORPORAL REX ARE AMONG THE BEST OF US.



YOU THREE GET SOME REST. NO MORE JOBS FOR A WHILE. WE'LL NEED TO CURTAIL ACTIVITY, NOW THAT THEY'VE DISCOVERED YOU.

I NEED TO THINK ABOUT OUR NEXT MOVE.



SNOW?

SNOW, ARE YOU OKAY?

WAKE UP.

ARE WE ALIVE?

LUCKY, HELL, THANK THE MUNDYS AND THEIR MARVELS OF MODERN ENGINEERING. THEY DESIGN THEM NOW TO TAKE ALL THE DAMAGE.

AT LEAST I SEEM TO BE IN ONE PIECE.

MORE OR LESS. LUCKY US. THE CAR SEEMS TO HAVE ABSORBED MOST OF THE DAMAGE.

ME TOO, EXCEPT FOR THIS.

OH MY GOD. THAT'S A NASTY BREAK. DOES IT--?

IT'LL BE FINE IN A MOMENT.

IT'LL HEAL ITSELF AS SOON AS I CHANGE TO WOLF FORM--PROVIDED I SET THE BONE FIRST.

I'LL NEED YOUR HELP.

PREPARE YOURSELF. IT WON'T BE FLIN, SNOW, BUT YOU'VE GOT TO HARDEN YOUR HEART TO EVERYTHING BUT GETTING THE JOB DONE.

PULL STEADILY. NO JERKING PLEASE, AND ONCE YOU START, DON'T STOP UNTIL IT'S IN PLACE, EVEN IF I'M SCREAMING BLOODY MURDER. I'LL TRY TO AVOID THRASHING, AT LEAST.

I THINK SO.

READY?


AWWWWWOOOOLL!

THAT DID IT, I THINK. YOU CAN LET GO NOW.

THANK YOU.

LET ME REST A MOMENT, THEN WE'LL BE ON OUR WAY.





YOU'RE BADLY INJURED. WE SHOULDN'T BE GOING ANYWHERE FOR A LONG WHILE.

AND YET WE *HAVE* TO. WE NEED TO PUT MORE DISTANCE BETWEEN US AND THE GUNMAN.

WHAT GUNMAN?

IT WASN'T JUST A FLAT TIRE THAT SENT US OVER THE CLIFF. THERE WAS A GUNSHOT, BUT ITS SOUND CAME AFTER THE BLOWOUT.

THE TRIP DOWN THE CLIFF ACTUALLY HELPED US SOME. IT ABRUPTLY REMOVED US FROM HIS KILLING ZONE-- SAVED US FROM A SECOND SHOT.

SO WE'LL NEED TO MOVE OUT FAST, AS SOON AS I CHANGE TO WOLF FORM. NIGHT OR DAY, I CAN COVER A LOT OF MILES QUICKLY, EVEN WITH A PASSENGER.

NOW HELP ME GET UNDRESSED. YOU'LL HAVE TO CARRY WHAT'S LEFT OF *MY* CLOTHES, AS WELL AS *YOUR* STUFF, IF YOU WANT ME TO HAVE SOMETHING TO WEAR, ONCE I CHANGE *BACK*.

YOU NO DOUBT COULDN'T HEAR IT OVER YOUR OWN SCREAMING AT THE TIME. MY EARS ARE MORE SENSITIVE, THOUGH.

BUT THAT WAS SOME TIME AGO, AND HE-- *WHOEVER* THE HUNTER IS-- WILL HAVE BEEN MOVING BACK IN ON US FOR ALL THAT TIME.







WOW!

HANG ON TIGHT, SNOW. YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY HURT ME.






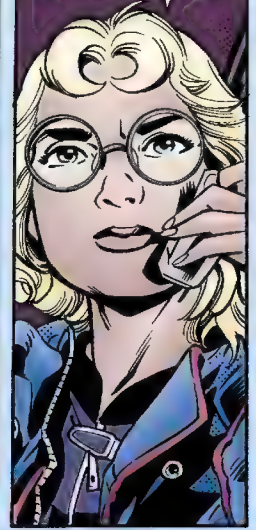
HELLO?

YES, IT'S GOOD NEWS. THE JOB'S FINALLY DONE. I BLASTED THEIR CAR OVER A CLIFF JUST UNDER TWO HOURS AGO.

NO, I COULDN'T HELP LETTING THEM REACH THEIR CAR. IT TOOK ME TWO FUCKING DAYS TO FIND SOMEONE WHO'D SELL ME A RIFLE WITHOUT THE THREE-FUCKING-DAY WAITING PERIOD.

JUST THIS AFTERNOON I GOT UP TO THEIR CAMPSITE, BUT THEY'D ALREADY LEFT.

WELL, IT'S CERTAINLY NOT MY FAULT. IF YOU'D USED A LONGER-LASTING SPELL, THEY'D STILL BE THERE WAITING FOR ME TO WALK UP AND SHOOT THEM AT CLOSE RANGE.



YES, I'LL WORK MY WAY DOWN TO THEIR CRASH SITE TO MAKE SURE THEY'RE DEAD. I WAS ALREADY DOING THAT WHEN YOU CALLED.

NOW HANG UP AND LET ME DO MY WORK.











OH MY GOD!

QUIET. I NEED TO GET A FEW HOURS' SLEEP WHILE IT'S STILL DARK ENOUGH TO CONCEAL US. YOU DO, TOO.

BUT I JUST REALIZED SOMETHING, WOLF. THERE WAS ONLY ONE TENT AND ONE SLEEPING BAG.



SO?

WERE WE SLEEPING TOGETHER?

I DOUBT IT. I DON'T THINK I WAS SLEEPING UNDER A TENT AT ALL. I SAW PLENTY OF WOLF TRACKS IN THE CAMPSITE AREA--TRACKS MY SIZE.



APPARENTLY I'D BEEN ASSUMING WOLF FORM AND RUNNING WILD--PROBABLY SLEEPING WILD, TOO. DON'T LET IT BOTHER YOU, PRINCESS. WE'VE GOT OTHER THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT JUST NOW.



IT'S NOT MY FAULT IF I'M OVERLY CONCERNED ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED BETWEEN US, UNDER THIS SPELL YOU CAUSED IT.



YOU'RE THE ONE WHO CONFESSED AN INTEREST IN ME.

AFTER WHICH YOU PROMPTLY SHOT ME DOWN. NOW CAN WE GET SOME SLEEP?

WHY?

BECAUSE I'M TIRED AND WE HAVE A LONG ROAD AHEAD OF US TOMORROW.

NO, WHAT I MEANT WAS, WHY ME? WHY THE INTEREST?

NOW YOU'RE SUDDENLY IN THE MOOD TO TALK ABOUT THIS? YOUR TIMING AMAZES ME.

I CAN'T SLEEP. I THINK I'M STILL TOO WIRED BY TODAY'S EVENTS. SO WHY AFTER SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS ARE YOU SUDDENLY ATTRACTED TO ME?

IT'S NOT ALL OF A SUDDEN. I DON'T ACT IMPULSIVELY. YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT BY NOW.

YOU'RE STALLING.

NO, I'M ANSWERING YOUR QUESTION, BUT IN MY OWN WAY. NOW SHUT UP, IF YOU WANT TO HEAR THIS.

NEXT: The Wolf's Tale





NATHAN